

Message Text

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17
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: JCP PREPARES FOR LATE-YEAR ELECTION

REFS: (A) TOKYO 6984; (B) TOKYO 8422

SUMMARY: IN PREPARATION FOR THIS YEAR'S DIET LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS, THE JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENED ITS FIRST CONVENTION IN THREE YEARS IN TOKYO ON JULY 28 AND APPROVED A NUMBER OF REFORMS AIMED AT ENHANCING ITS ELECTORAL APPEAL AND CONSOLIDATING THE INDEPENDENT, "SOFT-LINE" POLICY OF CHAIRMAN KENJI MIYAMOTO. AMENDMENTS TO THE PARTY PLATFORM--INCLUDING REMOVAL OF THE TERMS "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT" AND "MARXISM-LENINISM," THE ANNOINTING OF SEC GEN TETSUZO FUWA AS HEIR-APPARENT TO MIYAMOTO, AND THE ADOPTION OF A "DECLARATION OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY" CONSTITUTED THE MAJOR CHANGES ACCEPTED. DESPITE THESE REFURBISHMENTS, HOW-
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EVER, PUBLIC REACTION WAS WARY, WITH NEWSPAPER COMMEN-

TARY NOTING THAT DECISIONS WERE STILL REACHED IN AN AUTHORITARIAN MANNER WITH LITTLE EVIDENCE OF INTRAPARTY DEMOCRACY. AND OBSERVERS STILL DOUBTED THE JCP COULD SUCCESSFULLY CAPITALIZE ON EITHER ITS "NEW IMAGE" OR THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL TO IMPROVE ITS ELECTORAL SHOWING AGAINST THE LDP OR OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS THE 13TH EXTRAORDINARY CONVENTION OF THE JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY, THE FIRST SUCH MEETING IN THREE YEARS, OPENED FOR A THREE-DAY SESSION IN TOKYO ON JULY 28, THE MAJOR ITEM ON THE AGENDA WAS AMENDMENT OF THE PARTY PLATFORM AND RULES TO UNDERScore THE INDEPENDENT, "SOFT-LINE" POLICY PROMOTED BY CHAIRMAN KENJI MIYAMOTO. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED WERE THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE TERMS "THE POWER OF THE WORKING CLASS" FOR "DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT" AND "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM" FOR "MARXISM-Leninism." ALTHOUGH CALCULATED TO MAKE THE JCP MORE APPEALING TO WARY VOTERS IN THE UPCOMING DIET LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS, THESE CHANGES WERE SOMEWHAT VITIATED BY MIYAMOTO'S ASSURANCES TO PARTY TRADITIONALISTS THAT THE NEW SEMANTICS WERE COSMETIC AND WOULD NOT AFFECT THEORY. MIYAMOTO REPORTEDLY WAS OBLIGED TO MAKE QUALIFYING REMARKS ABOUT CHANGES IN ORDER TO MOLLIFY THOSE PARTY MEMBERS WHO FEARED THAT THE NEW LANGUAGE WOULD ELIMINATE, AT LEAST ON PAPER, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JCP AND THE JSP.

2. THE CONVENTION ALSO CONFIRMED SEC GEN TETSUZO FUWA, 45 AND A COMMUNIST DIETMAN, AS HEIR APPARENT TO CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO, 68. FUWA WAS APPOINTED CONCURRENTLY TO THE NEWLY-CREATED POST OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRESIDUM AND IS EXPECTED SOON TO EMERGE AS CHIEF PARTY SPOKESMAN, EVEN WHILE MIYAMOTO REMAINS IN THE TOP PARTY POSITION. ALL REPORTS INDICATE THAT FUWA HAS BEEN GROOMED CAREFULLY FOR THE SUCCESSION BY MIYAMOTO, WHO HAS BROUGHT HIM FORWARD AT THIS TIME TO ENHANCE THE PARTY'S "NEW LOOK."

3. IN ANOTHER EFFORT TO PROJECT A "DEMOCRATIC" APPEARANCE, THE CONVENTION ADOPTED A "DECLARATION OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY." THIS DOCUMENT DECLARES THAT THE JCP WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE THROUGH ELECTIONS; RETAIN THE MULTIPARTY PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM; AND MAINTAIN FREEDOM OF SPEECH, PRESS, RELIGION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION, IF IT COMES TO POWER.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: INITIAL PRESS REACTION INTERPRETED THE ANNOUNCED CHANGES AS SUPERFICIALLY TACTICAL, MOTIVATED BY BELIEF THAT A DEMOCRATIC IMAGE WILL FAVORABLY

IMPRESS THE GENERAL PUBLIC, OBLITERATING MEMORIES OF PAST PARTY MILITANCY. DESPITE THE BRIGHT NEW SLOGANS, HOWEVER, MOST INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS FELT THAT THE PARTY WOULD MAKE LITTLE HEADWAY IN COMING ELECTIONS, BECAUSE ITS INTERNAL OPERATIONS REMAIN SO OBVIOUSLY UNDEMOCRATIC AND ALSO BECAUSE PARTY SEEMS TO HAVE REACHED PEAK OF ITS ELECTORAL APPEAL. BY FOLLOWING MIYAMOTO'S "SOFT-LINE" AND SHREWDLY EXPLOITING LOCAL ISSUES, JCP HAS BUILT ITSELF INTO THE THIRD LARGEST PARLIAMENTARY PARTY, STANDING AT SOME DISTANCE BEHIND THE LDP AND JSP. BUT IN BOTH THE 1972 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION AND 1974 UPPER HOUSE POLL, THE PERCENTAGE OF GROWTH OVER PREVIOUS ELECTIONS DECLINED, AND MANY OBSERVERS EXPECT THE JCP TO LOSE ITS THIRD-RANK POSITION TO THE CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY IN THIS YEAR'S CONTEST. IF SUCH A REVERSAL OCCURS, THE ENTIRE MIYAMOTO "SOFT-LINE", PREMISED ON THE IDEA OF PEACEFUL REVOLUTION THROUGH CONSISTENT ELECTORAL GAINS, COULD COME UNDER CHALLENGE FROM THE PARTY CHAIRMAN'S CRITICS, WHO HERETOFORE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN QUESTIONING EITHER HIS AUTHORITY OR STRATEGY.

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